

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 53.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 1890. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "*Muriel's Marriage*," "*Joan Vellacot*,"
"*A Faire Damzell*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXI. WORTHLESS PAPERS.

ELVA walked upstairs as if she were treading upon golden clouds which were wafting her to heaven. The dressing-bell had just rung as Dr. Pink entered, and the happy girl fled. Her first thought was for Amice, whom she found sitting by the window of her room. There was no moon, only darkness in the sky, and a few stars shining between gathering clouds.

Elva went and threw herself on the ground beside her, and for once did not notice anything in her sister's face.

"Amice, darling, kiss me, wish me joy. It has all come upon me to-day; before I was always hesitating. I did not know if I cared enough, or if I could believe enough in him; but it is so different now. You should have seen him this afternoon; never one thought of himself. Amice, I saw then what a silly thing I had been to have had any doubt about him. Amice, Amice, this is life, this is happiness, if only I could hope you would some day have the same."

Amice took both her sister's hands and gazed into her face; the large, blue eyes had a strange, far-away expression that suddenly startled even Elva, who was used to Amice's curious ways.

"Amice, what is it? Why are you so grave, so sad to-night, when I am, oh! so happy, that I can't find words for it? I suppose papa will go and help him? I wish I might. I can't bear the idea that

they will hurt him. I never knew what love meant before. When it comes, dear Amice, there is no mistaking it. But even now I feel so miserable at the idea; he might have been killed, and then I should never have realised my loss. Isn't it foolish of me?"

"Do you love him very much?" said Amice, at last. "I knew that would come. If he were quite worthy of you, then I should be happier."

"Quite worthy of me. Now, you dear, gloomy child, don't utter such stupid fancies. But you did not see him as I did. If he had not been ordered off, he would have stayed to help the last poor unfortunate sufferer. Oh, I wonder how he ever got out! How horribly unfeeling one is when one is happy oneself. Fancy, Amice, Walter Akister was there; that was the only thing I did not like. I really think he must have the evil eye; he looked so angry when he saw me coming towards Hoel. I am glad Hoel is my first, my only love. I have never cared a bit about any one else, have I? I wonder if we shall quarrel? If we do, I know I shall give in; and yet that's quite unlike me. Amice, I never knew before that love does change one entirely; it makes one's whole character different. How strange!"

"Is papa glad?" asked Amice, laying her head on her sister's shoulder. "Dear Elva, I made him angry this afternoon—really angry. See!"

Amice drew up her sleeve a little, and showed a little red mark. Elva looked at it, and felt strangely afraid that her sister really was not quite like other people.

"Amice, what are you saying? What nonsense. Papa never in all his life was rough to any one, and least of all to one of us!"

Amice hastily pulled down her sleeve again, and was silent; and Elva thought it wiser to take no more notice of the incident.

"I wish—I were already Hoel's wife," she said, "because then I could do all his writing for him. Now, I do hope he will stay here till he is well. I must dress. What colour does he care most about? I am sure I don't know. There's a carriage driven up. Oh dear! it's the Squire and his wife; it is merely curiosity that has brought them. Symee, quick! Let me put on my velvet gown. I must go and receive them. Mamma is upstairs; and you look like a ghost, Amice."

In a very few minutes Elva hastened to receive the Eagle Bennisons, who, having heard of the accident, and garbled accounts about Mr. Fenner, came at once to see if they could help. Mrs. Eagle Bennison alternately smiled and looked pathetically grave.

"My sweet child. Yes, we have heard; so sad. Poor Mr. Fenner! and I fancied——"

Elva was not going to live through a string of innuendoes. She boldly spoke out after the Squire had added:

"Does Dr. Pink think there is any hope?"

"Oh dear, whatever have you heard? Not the truth, certainly. Mr. Fenner was coming to stay here for the Sunday——"

"As he had done several times already," smiled Mrs. Eagle Bennison.

"Yes, and he was in the train that met with the accident, but he was not hurt at all. Only when he was doing wonders towards rescuing the poor people who were many of them jammed in, some débris fell on him, and his arm was broken; but it is nothing serious, only, of course, very inconvenient."

"Really, is that so; but, perhaps, he won't mind much being an invalid in this charming society," said Mrs. Eagle Bennison.

"I hope he won't, considering we are engaged to each other," said Elva, quickly, and very decidedly.

"My dear child! How very interesting! Well, really—— John, do you hear? Do wish your favourite joy. Now, darling, I must kiss you. Such a talented young man! I feel it is all my doing. You met him first the evening of the dinner-party at our house."

"And your father, what does he think?" asked the Squire, kindly.

"Papa is not likely to object to my choice; and, besides, everybody likes and admires Mr. Fenner. I think I am——"

No, Elva would say no more; Mrs. Eagle Bennison was such a gossip.

"Well, really, now, won't George be interested! He made me believe that a certain Walter Akister was to be the lucky man. Even the accident quite pales in interest when compared with such a romantic ending to it. I wish I had known sooner. We had a meeting of the T.A.P.S., and our committee would have been so much interested. Dear Miss Heaton was only to-day speaking to me against matrimony. She says clergy oughtn't to marry; but, of course, critics—that is quite another thing. Don't begin to write stories, though, Elva dear; for your husband will be bound to praise you against his will."

Elva blushed, and thought Mrs. Eagle Bennison more odious than ever before; but happily, at this moment, Mr. Kestell himself entered the room. He looked as pale and agitated as if he himself had witnessed the accident.

"So your guest is not killed," said the Squire. "Really, how stories get exaggerated! Guthrie declared there was not a word true, and would not trouble himself to accompany us, so he has missed quite a startling piece of news!"

"Yes, my dear Mr. Kestell, let me wish you every happiness for this dear child. Little sly puss, not to tell us before!"

"Papa, Mrs. Eagle Bennison means that she is very much surprised that such a famous man is engaged to such a very unknown person as your daughter! What does Dr. Pink say?"

Mr. Kestell received the congratulation with his usual courtly politeness. He even looked much gratified as he placed his hand on his daughter's shoulder.

"The young ones soon forsake the nest, nowadays, Mr. Bennison; but I only wish to consult their happiness. I have long ago decided it is best to give in to their fads and fancies."

"Well, you are a good father! and so there is no anxiety about your patient?"

Dr. Pink now entered and answered for Mr. Kestell.

"None at all; but I have sent him to bed. To-morrow, he can do as he likes. The splints must not be moved; but at his age it will be but a short affair."

The accident was of course rehearsed, and then Elva asked the doctor:

"Was that poor man hurt when he was at last extricated?"

"No, not over much; but he'll be laid up at Greystone for some time. There is a rib broken; but I hope that is all. A marvellous escape! By the way, Mr. Kestell, when asked about his whereabouts the man gave the name of Joe Button, and said he was on his way to see you."

"Joe Button!" said Mr. Kestell, slowly.

"Yes, that was his name. He's gone to 'The Three Feathers.' I told him I would ask you what you knew of him."

"Ah, yes; thank you. I'm afraid the poor fellow must be hard up for cash if he came to see me. He was once employed by me in—in the North. Thank you; I will go and see him."

"Well, don't let him sponge upon you," laughed Dr. Pink; "the Company is bound to pay the doctors' bills of these poor people. Now I must go back. I expect I shall be up all night; but I'm glad your patient will cause you no anxiety. A very simple case indeed."

Mr. Kestell followed the doctor to the door, and the Eagle Bennisons soon took their leave, the Squire saying that he should drive on to Greystone, and see if he could be of any service to any of the sufferers. Left to his own devices, the Squire was as tender-hearted as a woman; but he had his spouse to reckon with.

"Good-bye, dear Elva," said this lady; "come and tell me all about it to-morrow. I do love young people, you know; and an engagement is quite an excitement in poor out-of-the-way Rushbrook."

Everything was disorganised to-day; for when dinner was announced, Amice sent down word that she would stay up with her mother, who wanted to hear about the accident. Elva was restless and excited, and Mr. Kestell rather silent till the servants left the room. Then father and daughter were once more alone.

"Dear old dad, I suppose I have given in now, and I thought once I never should. I hope he will be able to stay here some time. Papa, say you like him very, very much, or we shall disagree."

How different this daughter was from the other, thought Mr. Kestell, as he looked up with rather a sad smile.

"Would anything or anybody turn you against your old father, Elva?"

"No," she answered with flashing eyes, "of course not. Not even Hoel! But you do like him?"

"Of course. Don't imagine anything to

the contrary, my dear! By the way, I looked in just now, and Fenner was going off to sleep. Jones quite enjoys an invalid he tells me."

"I have always wanted you to have a son, papa; and now you will really have one."

"One who wants to rob me of a daughter!"

"Not really; we shall be here often, very often; we shall always be running down. I hate London, you know. Oh, I am a country bird, and shall never be a town sparrow; but I shall be a help to him, for, after all, you know, papa, women do see things rather all round, or else they see one side very clearly, and either of these things is useful to the lords of creation, who take such a time to turn round on their own axis!"

"You impudent girl! You must go to bed early, and rest after such a day. I think I shall order the carriage and go to Greystone. The Squire shames me into action."

"You, papa! At this time of night; why, it is past eight o'clock."

"Yes; but this Joe Button may be penniless. He used to work for me, and I pensioned him; but I fear he drinks all the money before he gets it. Poor wretch!"

"The fellow ought not to have been coming down to beg of you, papa, when you are so kind. You spoil everybody."

"So that you are happy, darling, nothing matters."

"Papa, you are always good to me. Sometimes I wonder how I can leave you. It seems as if I couldn't realise that part."

There was a sob in Elva's voice.

"No, no, not more good than you deserve. You, at least, have never given me anxiety."

The emphasis on "you" made Elva suddenly recall Amice's words. One glance at her father's face made her feel sure he could not be harsh. But she would make herself certain of the fact.

"Papa, what is the matter with dear old Amice just now? She has such queer fancies. Actually, she says you are angry with her, and believes you made a mark on her arm!"

Elva laughed to hide a feeling of shame she had at even mentioning such a thing.

"No, it must be fancy. Don't believe anything she tells you. I have myself noticed how curiously fanciful she is; it rather distresses me; in fact, if it could be

managed, Amice ought to go away for change of air."

Elva was relieved, and yet also perplexed and distressed for her sister's sake. She had seen the mark. Then who had made it?

"That would be no use; she would never leave home without me."

"Then could you not, both of you, go away a little, and take Symes with you?"

"Oh, papa! not now of course—oh no. Don't take any notice of Amice; she is so horribly shy sometimes, even of you."

"Very well; I only suggested it; I don't know why. Of course you could not leave home just now, and the winter is coming on. We must try in the spring, before your wedding, to go to Paris. But what will Fenner say? He may want you at Christmas, perhaps. A little Christmas gift. Well, well, we shall see. No, everything must go on as usual."

Elva had lost herself in a dream of happiness, and did not notice her father's changing mood. Nothing was really as usual to-day.

When she rose to go, her father kissed her and bade her good night.

"Go to bed, child. I shall go upstairs and see your mother, and then drive to Greystone. Don't tell her or any one; she is so easily made nervous. I shall be late, I dare say."

Elva put her arms round his neck. She was nearly as tall as he was, and she could lay her cheek near to his.

"Papa, thank you a hundred times for all your goodness about Hoel. You did exactly what was right; you gave me time to be sure; and now I am sure. I do believe it was all your doing. Say, God bless you."

Mr. Kestell kissed the soft cheek in silence, and so tender and long was the kiss that Elva forgot the omission of the words, for, at that moment Amice opened the door and said that Mrs. Kestell wanted to see Elva. She did not enter the room, and Elva, remembering her curious ideas, went hastily away with her. After this, Mr. Kestell rang the bell and ordered the carriage to come round.

"Mr. Fenner sent you a message, Elva. He begged you would go to bed early and rest, and said you were not to worry about him, as he felt quite comfortable," said Amice.

"I won't worry; why should I? I am so happy. Now I will go and tell mother a very little outline of the whole afternoon, and then go to bed."

"I will sit up then, in case anything is wanted. I shall tell Jones I shall be in the morning-room. He will sit up with Mr. Fenner."

"You must call him Hoel, now," said Elva, laughing; and then the happy girl went to see her mother, and afterwards to bed.

Greystone was still in a state of excitement over the railway accident; but as the night was dark, it was chiefly in the public-houses that the common people discussed it. At "The Three Feathers," especially, the topic was interesting, as, upstairs, lay one of the sufferers. When Mr. Kestell's carriage stopped at the door, the innkeeper felt decidedly elated, and came forward with alacrity to speak to the gentleman. Every one knew Kestell of Greystone's carriage; had it not been a daily sight these many years past? Mr. Kestell himself looked rather more smiling and kind than usual when he enquired after the sufferer.

"I hear a certain Joseph Button is laid up here. Poor man, I know something of him, and would like to see him if this is possible. Dr. Pink told me he could be found here."

"Yes, sir; will you walk up, sir? A most unfortunate accident. They say there are ten in Greystone to-night unable to move; but the rest have gone on to their friends. The man you speak of is rather easier now, thank you, sir."

"I am very glad to hear that. Yes, I will see him. Did he have any luggage?"

"Just a bag, sir, which has only been brought here half an hour ago. Come up the private stairs, sir. Betty, show Mr. Kestell up to the room where the injured man is."

The landlord touched his forelock and returned to the bar, leaving Mr. Kestell to Betty, his wife. Mr. Kestell walked slowly up the steep stairs, for "The Three Feathers" was an old house. Betty Stevens, with many curtsies and much whispered advice, opened the door, and ushered Mr. Kestell into the sick man's room.

"Mr. Button, here's a kind gentleman come to see you. The doctor said he wasn't to speak much, sir; but a few words cheers a body up wonderful, I think, sir."

Mr. Kestell took no heed of the doctor's orders, or, at all events, he did not apologise further than by saying:

"I merely wish to say a few words to

the invalid. I shall not detain—I mean, I do not wish to tire him.”

“It’s Mr. Kestell,” said Joe Button, not being able to do more than turn his head round. “Well, sir; that is kind of you; but, begging your pardon, sir, it’s d—”

“Mr. Button, don’t swear, please. I’m truly sorry to see you in this difficulty. Why did you leave London?”

“Well, sir, being hard up, I thought— You see, I lately talked to a young fellow, you know, called Vicary, and he said as how you were very kind. In fact, I’ve come to live in the country.”

“Is that all?”

“Well, yes, sir. I thought the nearer I could be to you the better. When a poor devil has been a gentleman, as you might say, why, it’s rather hard for him to find himself near cleared out.”

Mr. Kestell took a sovereign from his pocket.

“The Company will pay all your expenses, I fancy; but take this for the present.”

Joe reached out his right hand and took it. It was one of his left ribs that was broken.

“Don’t let yourself be robbed,” said Mr. Kestell. Then, correcting himself, he added: “I only mean—of course—in these places—”

“Don’t you fear, sir; I’m sharp enough. Besides, my property won’t tempt people. I was bringing down my old papers to show you, sir, and see if you could not do something for me. When a man’s been in better positions, it’s hard to come down to being as I am.”

“Through your own fault, Button, entirely your own fault. I found you living in a cottage, paying rent to—I forget now all the transactions; but your father sold the land, and then you felt hurt afterwards that you did not know it was valuable.”

“It was my father’s obstinacy, sir. I was too young to make him listen to me. I said often that I fancied it might be valuable, but he was never for doing anything but drink; and so, being rather short of funds, he sold it to a gentleman.”

“Land changes hands very quickly at times. You never saw the gentleman who was said to have bought it, did you, Button? I don’t think I have ever asked you before; if I have, I have forgotten your answer.”

The landlady’s footsteps were heard at this moment, and she coughed a little to make her near presence known. Joe Button glanced towards the door. He wanted to ask Mr. Kestell something more than about long-past transactions.

“Yes, sir, I remember his coming once, I think. He was a fine-looking gentleman; quite young and handsome. The other day I was reminded of him by seeing some one like him. Is he alive, sir?”

“No. I told you before he was dead; but when I came into the property I did all I could for you, Button, feeling sorry for your small means; for, had you been able to keep your land, you would have been well off. But then, again, you would never have had capital enough to work it. Ah! here is your good nurse; I must go.”

“Wait a minute, sir; you say the Company will pay up, don’t you?”

Mr. Kestell smiled at the landlady.

“Don’t distress yourself about that; and in the meantime, Mrs. Stevens, you can apply to me for anything that is necessary. Mind you, I don’t mean to pay for your special luxury, Button. It would be bad for you—very bad. It might lead to fever, and I know not what other complications. No whiskey, Button, eh? However, everything in reason I will advance, and trust to the Company to repay me.”

“Well, sir, I’m sure that is speaking handsome; and you may trust me, sir. We care for our good name more than for anything else. I often says to my husband, I’d rather starve than serve out drink to a man as is already fuddled, sir. No, there’s no one as can say our house isn’t respectable; cheerful company, and just enough liquor to help a poor man’s bread-and-cheese to go down easy, sir. That’s our principles.”

“Very good, very good principles,” said Mr. Kestell. “By the way, Button, you said you had some papers you were bringing for my inspection. Perhaps I had better take them now.”

Joe Button did not approve of this; but the gold sovereign was firmly glued to his palm. It is difficult to refuse anything to the donor of gold.

“Well, sir, if you’ll keep them safe for me, when I get up from this bed, why, I’ll come round and claim them again. A man likes to have his papers to show, even if they’re not worth much.”

“Of course, Button. Well, I think you can trust me. You can have them all back

as soon as you like. I will see what can be done for you. Good night. I hope you will soon be all right; and don't forget moderation."

Mr. Kestell lifted the black bag, and brought it to the bedside.

"Where shall I find them, Button?"

The bag was not locked; the papers lay at the bottom—a good-sized parcel of yellow parchment, and aged letters, tied with red tape.

"I know their number, sir," said Button, suspicious, though he knew his papers were perfectly worthless. "I'll call round for them when I'm well."

Then the poor fellow, tired with the conversation and all he had gone through, turned his head round, and took no more notice of his visitor.

Mr. Kestell spoke a few words to the landlady, a few more to the landlord, and then entered his carriage, still holding the old papers, and told the coachman to drive home.

"He once saw him," he said to himself. "Well, there is no harm in that. Button was a lad himself; and these papers are worthless, utterly worthless; but I can feel for him. If his father had not sold that property, they might have been in a very different position. That is the way fate treats people. If he had lived, it would have been the same; most likely he would never have known. But it is strange that Button should turn up just now—very strange."

TOBERMORY.

IN no part of the playgrounds of Europe is the traveller more closely bound to follow the course of the designated highways than in the Highlands of Scotland. The orderly Caledonian mind has devised and knit together a system of railways, stage-coaches, and steamboats; so that one is taken up at a given hour in the early morning, shot through the roads, and lakes, and passes, which come within the day's work, and duly returned to the hotel in time for table d'hôte, served at separate tables by German waiters. But here and there an opportunity is given for the exercise of free will on the part of those who have had the forethought to abjure circular tickets; and, if these opportunities be seized, the memory of the month's outing will, in all probability, be richer and pleasanter, though, perhaps, one or two of the stock sights may be missed.

One of these chances of escape from guide-book thralldom will be at hand when the tourist, shipped on board the steamer to do the regular round to Staffa and Iona, or the voyage to Skye, finds himself, after threading the Sound between the almost treeless shores of Mull and Morven, in a little semi-circular bay, which looks as if it might be a bit of Devonshire transported northwards. Here and there the cliffs rise abruptly from the sea, and, by their reflection, give a dark-purple fringe to the sheet of water which, almost land-locked as it is, is generally as calm as a millpond; but for the most part moss-grown fragments, fallen from above, make a craggy slope, which gives good rooting ground for trees, so that the wood begins almost where the water ends.

In the north-west corner of the bay, at the foot of the high ground, runs a row of white houses, redeemed from monotony by the more striking lines of a church and a distillery; and, dotted about the heights, are a dozen or so of villas. There is the usual bumping and grinding of the steamer against the pier; the usual exchange of passengers and merchandise takes place. Some one says it is Tobermory; and then the mere tourist is sped away to Portree, or Gairloch, or Loch Maree, or some place which has had the good fortune to attract, in a greater degree, the attention of the guide-book compiler.

If it be, indeed, the truth that a land without a history is happy, then Mull ought to be a veritable isle of the blest, for none of the battles or sieges, or royal murders, or conspiracies, of which the Scottish annals are so prolific, took place within its borders. Mull men may have been out in the '15, or the '45; but if they were, they soon went in again, and left no trace of their excursion. One fact, and one only, the guide-book historian finds to quote apropos of Tobermory. During the disastrous retreat of the Spanish Armada round the north of Britain, one of the great ships was driven ashore near the town, and, doubtless there were rare doings when the worthy burgesses returned with their sacks full of unconsidered trifles from the ill-starred "Florida." Some horses got ashore from the wreck, and tradition says that this new strain greatly improved the existing breed, and made the Mull cattle famous through the West. There is still a large horsefair in August, where, perhaps, one might still acquire an animal sprung from Castilian aires. Two

brass guns from the wreck of the "Florida" were afterwards recovered from the sea, and these are now preserved at Dunolly Castle, near Oban.

The literary traveller, too, will seek in vain in Mull for any spot apropos of which he can bring out his carefully-stored lines of Burns or Scott. There is no "brig" where "the foremost horseman rode alone;" no "auld haunted kirk;" no ford where "thou must keep thee with thy sword;" no banks and braes, bonny or otherwise; but for those who only find modified pleasure in rattling char-a-bancs and crowded steamers; who want to be let alone to get through their holiday without sight-seeing, Tobermory is a place worth knowing of. To begin with, it is a sort of privilege to live in a place where the Atlantic Ocean is only just round the corner, as it is at Tobermory. The lovely little harbour, with Calve Island—its natural breakwater—to intercept even the modest waves of the Sound of Mull outside, may be smooth as a mirror; the Sound itself is a well-behaved strait; but round the point, if one takes the trouble to climb to the height above Ardmure, the rollers may be seen breaking into spray against the rocks of Ardnamurchan, which geographers tell us is the westernmost part of the mainland of Britain. And on a fine, clear day there is something better to be seen than breakers. The ocean will be calm and blue as turquoise; to the south the long, low island of Tiree loses itself behind the next promontory. On the other side, beyond Ardnamurchan, rise the fine mountains of Rum; and, if it be very clear indeed, the inland Skye Coolins may be seen; and Ben Nevis also, far away beyond the head of Loch Suinart, which runs eastward from the opposite side of the Sound.

This walk, over the heather and bracken, with the endless ridges of rock and moor on one side, and the Sound glittering in the sun some three hundred feet below on the other, is an experience to be treasured; and it is one which may be taken without dread of a meeting with the truculent gillie, who is in many other districts the terror of the pedestrian. The reason for this immunity is to be found in the fact that grouse-shooting on the coast is practically worthless. Occasionally, however, there are indications that the trespasser is disapproved of. Though the tourist is, and will probably remain, a comparatively rare object in Mull, the landed proprietor

has not neglected to show his humour by setting up those prohibitory notices and barbed-wire fences which have made him so popular in other parts of Scotland; but this remark applies chiefly to the immediate neighbourhood of Tobermory. Once let the man with the knapsack get a few miles inland, and he will find as much free rock and heather as he can wish for. The two chief hotels in the town have very fair trout-fishing for their guests in Loch Mishnish and Loch Frisa, and for those who care for sea-fishing, and dread not the free and lively motion of a small boat, there are, according to the testimony of men seemingly voracious, banks of whiting and silver haddies anxiously waiting to be hooked at the mouth of the Sound.

But the people who will find in Tobermory an ideal resting-place, are those who are in search of fresh air and freedom from all necessity of going somewhere to see something. Of course one must go for a walk; and there are two walks near at hand which are simply perfect. Neither of them is more precipitous than a switchback, and both are deliciously shaded and overhanging the sea, which breaks upon the rocks some hundred feet below.

What more can a lazy holiday-maker want? Now and then he may stretch his legs and try his wind by climbing the moor to get a sight of the Atlantic; but the odds are that he will patronise one of the above-named walks on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and the other on the alternate days.

In taking life easily the holiday-maker will find himself powerfully aided and abetted by the resident population of Tobermory. It would be hard to find, out of Italy, a business community which goes about getting a living in more leisurely fashion. Nearly every other one of the crescent of houses, which is built along the quay, is occupied by a "general merchant," a person who in Scotch rural economy discharges the functions of the English village shopkeeper. The limits of his traffic are extensive as his style proclaims, and include almost every domestic requisite, from paraffin-lamps to unripe plums and gooseberries; but, for all this, he finds plenty of time for leisure and unbusiness. Every steamer that touches at the pier—and there are on an average five or six in the course of the day—is sped and welcomed by the entire trafficking population of the

town. They all do it, so there is no unfair stealing of marches the one on the other.

With an example such as the above, set by the people who are in the full stress and hurry of getting a living, there is no wonder that the jaded man of books or business, for the nonce an idler, should become very idle indeed. He will carefully time his daily walk so as never to miss being on the pier to welcome each arriving steamboat. As the Staffa or the Skye boat comes up, he can wonder, if it be outward bound, whether there is a big sea on outside, and cheerfully speculate as to how many of the fortunate sight-seers will be writhing in agony before the next hour shall have struck. Then, in the course of the day, a dozen yachts may put in, and he can inspect the burgees of these through an opera-glass to see if he can determine the club to which they belong, and wonder whether either of them may belong to a man who once took him sailing in a three-ton cutter at Erith.

In short, all the "wonders of the sea-shore" may be enjoyed at Tobermory, just as thoroughly as at Ramsgate or Bognor, with this additional advantage, that the wonderer's operations will never be interrupted by nigger minstrels, or Salvationists, or itinerant photographers, or suggestions as to the eminent fitness of the day for a sail. The boats available are few, and to secure the use of one of them, a certain amount of negotiation is necessary. If Dugald, at one end of the quay, be interrogated as to whether a particular one may be free or not, he will yell out something in Gaelic to Donald at the other, and at the end of a colloquy they will go off together and fetch a "general merchant" out of his emporium, and with the arrival of this gentleman, the real owner of the boat, direct business may begin, and the boat eventually be secured at the rate of something like sixpence per hour.

With regard to the music, the thrum of the harp and the wheeze of the concertina, discoursing, from the deck of an excursion steamer at the pier, the latest popular airs, will be the worst infliction of the vagrant musician that the wonderer is likely to feel, and it only lasts five minutes, at the most.

Then, again, Mull is a long way from London, even by the shortest route, and there is therefore less chance that he will be followed up by any of the people he cordially dislikes, simply because he sees them every day of his life—or for some more intelligible reason.

ON THE EMBANKMENT.

WHEN people start at night from Charing Cross Station for Paris or the Continent in general, they are mostly too much occupied with their loose baggage, rugs, and newspapers to notice a scene, which, for brilliance, splendour, and a fairy-like glamour, is not to be matched, no, not in any of the fair and famous cities to which they may be travelling. If the night should be dark, say in early spring, when Parliament is sitting and London's gay season has just commenced, while a full tide brims in the river from bank to bank, then, as the train passes from the steam, and fume, and twinkling lights of the station, and begins to rumble over the big railway bridge, the brilliant show opens out with startling effect. It is a feast of lanterns, you would say, watching the myriad lights that sparkle in every direction, in a thousand reflections from the river; in brilliant lines on the Embankment and bridges; gleaming from the Towers of Westminster; moving lights, too, flitting to and fro continually in a mazy, bewildering dance. In another moment the brilliant scene is shut out, and we are rumbling over dark house-tops, and peering over into dismal, slummy courts; and when we cross the river lower down, towards Cannon Street, its aspect is altogether different. There are lights still, but of a quiet, sober kind; we hear the roar of traffic over London Bridge, and solemn gleams strike upwards from the dark waters beneath.

It is not necessary to be starting for Paris or Rome in order to see all this. From the foot-bridge, that runs alongside the Charing Cross Railway Bridge, there is a sufficiently good view of the river, although spoilt by the plaguy girders that intervene between Westminster and the spectator. And the foot-bridge suggests reminiscences to middle-aged people. It is a legacy from old Hungerford. That was a nice bridge, if you please, for a quiet promenade. There was a halfpenny toll that kept the place select, as far as numbers went; and though, like the present foot-bridge, it formed a convenient short cut to places on the other side of the water, yet it led to such a curious slummy labyrinth, that only the very knowing ones could find their way through it. And, to reach Hungerford Bridge, you passed through Hungerford Market.

Alas, poor Hungerford! altogether wiped out and demolished by railway terminus and Embankment. Not even the name of you is left as a memorial. It is all Charing Cross now; and a moral might be drawn from the circumstance, were not morals a little out of fashion. Charing Cross, which records the virtues of a good Queen, extends and blossoms everywhere, down here by the river, up there in a new avenue towards Oxford Street, while Hungerford, a name associated with violence, crime, and waste, has perished altogether.

For the Hungerfords, who gave their name to the market here, were certainly a very bad lot, and their fate is so curiously intertwined with that of Hungerford by Charing Cross, that it may be worth while to know a little about them. They were an ancient fighting family to begin with, originally of that pleasant, fishy town of Hungerford, which stands by a ford on the River Kennet. And they fought with credit and distinction in the French wars, winning great ransoms from noble prisoners taken at Crécy or at Poitiers, and building a fine castle at Farley Hungerford, in Wiltshire, with the spoil. They fought valiantly also for the House of Lancaster in the Wars of the Roses; and Lord Hungerford was one of the first to join the Earl of Richmond, and helped to win the Battle of Bosworth Field. So that, with the victory of their cause, and the favour of their Prince, it might have been expected that they would have risen to the highest distinction. And with their grand country château, and their mansion by the Thames, the Hungerfords ruffled it with the best, till fate set a tragic mark upon them.

Close by the castle of the Hungerfords lived, in the early years of the reign of Henry the Eighth, a worthy man, one John Cotell, something in the way of a scrivener, probably, and steward or man of business to Sir Edward Hungerford; the latter a man of middle age, and a widower, with a grown-up son. Cotell's wife, Mistress Agnes, was young and fair, unscrupulous enough with her charms to captivate and enslave the elderly Knight, and yet sufficiently cold and calculating to preserve her own reputation. But to be Lady Hungerford, and the mistress of castles and manors, and all the rich jewels, and plate, and furniture that adorned them, was temptation too great for resistance. Only the elderly scrivener was in the way, and Agnes presently suborned two sturdy yeomen to make away with him. It was

their lord's pleasure, they were told, and they set about the work with as little compunction as though it had been an affair of killing a sheep or a calf. They waylaid Cotell, strangled him with a kerchief, and cast his body into the great fireplace of the kitchen of Farley Castle. Some plausible account was doubtless given of the man's disappearance. "He had gone abroad on his lord's business, and so died."

Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck.

Thus might Dame Agnes have addressed her noble lover, who married her, anyhow, forthwith. And although many must have known, and more suspected, that a foul deed had been done, yet none dared venture to speak out. Little more than a year elapsed, and the Knight was seized with a mortal illness. Lady Hungerford retained her empire over him to the last. In his will, made shortly before his death, he bequeathed her everything of which he died possessed, except the bare lands which his son inherited. Lady Hungerford, after her lord's death, hastened to London, proved the will, and entered into possession of all the rich furniture, jewels, and belongings, which she had lost herself to gain. Then the bolt fell upon her. The black barge from the Tower was in waiting at Hungerford Stairs, and dainty Dame Agnes stepped into it as the halbertmen made a lane for her to pass.

Justice, slow and cumbrous to move, was stern and inexorable when once set in motion; and the sequel is given in the chronicle of old Stow. "The twentieth February, 1523, the Lady Alice Hungerford"—a mistake, her real name was Agnes—"a Knight's wife, for murdering her husband was led from the Tower of London to Holborne, and there put in a cart with one of her servants, and so carried to Tiborne and both hanged." The second accomplice in the murder of Cotell was hanged a few months after. All that Dame Agnes had inherited under her husband's will was forfeited to the Crown; but it seems probable that her stepson Walter, who was "squire for the body" to the King, had influence enough to obtain the most of the goods and chattels. This Walter, afterwards Lord Hungerford, was such a desperate scoundrel that we might suspect some revengeful plot against his stepmother; but that the criminals themselves seem never to have disputed the justice of their doom.

The new Lord Hungerford made him-

self a byword and reproach for his horrible way of life. Two of his wives came to untimely ends from his barbarous treatment, the third lived to denounce him, and to bring her wrongs before the Privy Council. Three or four years she had been shut up in one of the towers of Farley Castle. Continual attempts were made to poison her. She would have died of starvation, but that the poor women of the country round, pitying her sad lot, brought her food at night "for the love of God." At last my noble lord, in some of his diabolical excesses, got within the meshes of the law, was clapped in the Tower, and was presently condemned and beheaded. He suffered on the same scaffold as Cromwell, Earl of Essex, Wolsey's successor in King Harry's favour, who, "passing out of the prison down the hill within the Tower, and meeting there by the way the Lord Hungerford, going likewise to his execution; and perceiving him to be all heavy and doleful, cheered him with comfortable words."

Henceforth the Hungerfords seem to have been distinguished rather for weakness than wickedness, till the days of the last of the line, Sir Edward Hungerford, who built a magnificent house on the site of the old family dwelling by the River Thames. Among the gay and greedy courtiers and dames of the Restoration, Sir Edward speedily made away with his paternal acres; a wild, foolish fellow, who is said to have once given five hundred guineas for a wig to cover his poor, silly pate. The destruction of his fine house by fire one night in 1669 was the last straw that completed his ruin; and, hoping to mend his fortunes, he obtained permission, and afterwards a Royal charter, to hold a market three days a week on the site of his house and gardens.

Yet ill-luck pursued the place, and the goodly market, although well situated for its purposes, did not take. It soon passed away from Sir Edward's control; and, divested of every scrap of his once vast possessions, the last of the Hungerfords lived to a good old age as a poor Knight of Windsor.

Sir Christopher Wren and cannie Sir Stephen Fox bought the market, and thought to make much of it, but were disappointed. So that in 1735 Seymour writes of it: "Likely to have taken well, lying so convenient for gardeners," who brought down most of their produce by boat, "but being balked at first, turned to

little account, and that of Covent Garden hath got the start." And kept it, too, it may be added; so that now Covent Garden is first, and Hungerford literally and absolutely nowhere. Yet there was a fine market-hall, which Wren had something to do with building; and the French Protestant Church, now in Bloomsbury, was settled in the upper floor for more than a century. And there were commodious stalls below, with cellars, and other conveniences. Yet the whole had been rebuilt and remodelled by Fowler, the architect of Covent Garden, early in the present century.

There was a pretty steady stream of traffic, too, in old Hungerford Market, and it assumed something of the air of a little Billingsgate, with fish shops, and a show of shrimps and winkles; though no fisher-boats, as far as we know, unloaded their stores at Hungerford Stairs. It was a place for Devonshire butter and dairy produce; and the light and toothsome gauffre might there be had, hot from the honey-combed iron—and, indeed, may still be found, under the shadow of the mighty railway station. Here, too, the penny ice took its first development.

On Sundays, in summer, when steam-boats were crammed and fiddle and harp were twanging merrily on board, people would pass up and down Hungerford Market in crowds, and street preachers would hold forth in the open space, where a yellow omnibus or two was always to be found on the point of starting for the "Mother Redcap."

But here, about old Hungerford, the Embankment has taken in a goodly slice of the foreshore of the river, which, at low tides, was a shining, unsavoury mudbank. And here we have the Embankment Gardens, pleasant enough, with green lawns, upon which the London sparrows congregate in delighted flocks; with flower-beds, and a plentiful provision of seats for weary wayfarers. Yet would the gardens be better frequented if they were more accessible from the Strand. How much of the river bed has been reclaimed may be realised in a glance at the fine old water-gate that once formed the river approach to Buckingham House. It stands now high and dry, and forlornly cut off from approach on either side, a graceful, florid archway, weatherworn, yet comely still, and bearing the arms of the brilliant favourite who built it. It has always been known as York Gate; for the site was the

town house of the Archbishops of York, after Wolsey lost Whitehall, and had had many noted tenants. The great Lord Bacon was born here, and hoped to die here; but was reluctantly compelled to surrender his interest in it after his fall, when King James got hold of it for his favourite Steenie, who rebuilt the place in great splendour. During the Commonwealth, Lord Fairfax, the Black Tom of his soldiers, had a grant of the house, and his daughter, who, as a child, had shared her father's desperate ride to Hull, lashed to a trooper on horseback, restored the house, by marriage, to the second Duke of Buckingham.

The Duke, who was nothing if not whimsical, sold the house and its grounds for thirty thousand pounds, with the curious stipulation that his name and title should be kept in memory in the new buildings. Thus we have still, between the Strand and the Embankment, George, Villiers, Duke, Buckingham streets, and there is even a little "Of" Court, to complete the title. And York Place, out of Villiers Street, still retains a memory of the more ancient tenants of the place.

The new buildings on the site, streets of solid, respectable houses of red brick, still retain very much of their original aspect, although demolition and reconstruction are imminent. The river terrace in front may be still made out, although stranded and left dry by the Embankment. Much of the building enterprise was carried on by the York Buildings Company, in which Mr. Samuel Pepys, of the Diary, was a shareholder. Samuel himself, when he left the Navy Office in Seething Lane, came to live at York Buildings, and occupied chambers overlooking the river at the end of Buckingham Street on the west side, and for a time he had the Czar Peter as an opposite neighbour in the same street. The terrace in front of York Buildings was planted with trees, and formed a pleasant promenade for the residents. Presently upon the terrace rose a huge octagonal tower of wood belonging to the waterworks, set on foot by the Company. The river water was then tolerably pure, and was pumped from the Thames to the top of the tower, and then distributed in pipes over the district. A horse-gin was constantly at work pumping up water, and later on horses were superseded by a "fire engine;" but this was eventually abandoned as too expensive.

In its building and water-supply enterprises the Company was very successful; but it came under the management of persons of an enterprising and speculative character, who employed its funds in a very curious fashion. The disastrous rising of the Jacobites in 1715 had been harshly suppressed, and many of the Scotch adherents of the Stuarts had lost lives and lands for the cause. Yet there was considerable difficulty in disposing of the forfeited estates, and it was suggested that the York Buildings Company should buy them up and turn them to account. Thus the Company became large landowners in Scotland, and entered with light hearts upon the possession of castles, mansions, forests, lakes, and mountains, and became nominally the lords of districts whose inhabitants held strongly to their ancient feudal chiefs. All kinds of claims and interests, too, sprang up about the forfeited lands. Rents were unpaid, or sent over the water to the representatives of the proscribed chiefs, and the Scotch Courts of Law had few sympathies with the intruding cockneys, so that every attempt to enforce their purchased rights was hindered by endless difficulties. The Company also took to mining enterprises, and on the wild, desolate shores of Ardnamurchan, in Argyle, where Atlantic gales come howling against a rock-bound coast, they established a mining settlement, or New London, that sheltered a large population of miners and their families. Then there were forests to be cut down; and this part of the business seems to have been effected rigorously. But it all ended in ruin and disaster. The mines were finally abandoned in 1740, and the leading spirit of the Company, Colonel Samuel Horsey, died in jail in the same year. Large sums had been raised by the sale of annuities, and the wreck of the Company's property was administered for the benefit of the annuitants and other creditors. The buildings were there; those solid, respectable streets, where one short, connecting street still bears the name of York Buildings, and is generally considered as in the Adelphi, although it more properly belongs to what we may call Buckinghambury. The wooden tower and waterworks existed, too, almost to the beginning of the present century.

These quiet streets between the Strand and the river are, indeed, wonderfully tranquil, and free from the turmoil of the city. Formerly they were occupied chiefly in residential chambers; and here and

there may still be left one or two of the oldest inhabitants, who have stuck to their quarters through the changes of the years. But now the houses are almost engrossed in offices—engineers, architects, solicitors, philanthropic societies and others, with here and there, perhaps, a quiet club. At night the glare of light from the Strand shows over the house-tops, as if some great fire were in progress; and the noise of the people coming from the theatres, the shouts of link-boys, and the clatter of the cabs echo along the silent streets, which stand apart, and take no share in all this midnight revelry.

Of the same quiet character, too, is the Adelphi, although there is more movement within its precincts. For here we have hotels and clubs, and even boarding-houses, and some of the old inhabitants of the Adelphi still retain their chambers there. Few leave the Adelphi voluntarily; but, as the residents cannot live for ever, there comes a time when the chambers become vacant, and then they are eagerly secured for business purposes. But any time within the present century, the Adelphi would have formed an equally good hunting ground with the Inns of Court, or other quiet residential nooks, for a student of character. Wealthy virtuosi, retired "Captains, or Colonels, or Knights-in-Arms," grizzled old sea captains, who had shared in the sea fights of Nelson, a judge or two who loved the racket of the Strand, dramatists and litterateurs of the age of Dickens and Thackeray, such were some of the familiar figures to be met with up and down Adam Street, and John Street, and by the Royal Terrace.

Now, the Adelphi, as everybody knows, in its name commemorates the brothers who built it. Cannie Scottish brothers, four of them, lads fra' Kirkcaldy, who had graduated at Edinbro', and who came up to London under the wing of Lord Bute. They were in great demand among the nobility as architects, and obtained snug Government commissions through the influence of their patron. They built Sion House, Kenwood and Luton Park mansions, the latter for Lord Bute himself. Of course, the Princess employed them, whose partiality for Lord Bute irritated the popular feeling so much, and caused old boots to be flung after her carriage, not for luck, when she appeared in public. And so we find the brothers busy about Carlton House and St. James's Palace. They are great in ruins also, they built a

sham Roman aqueduct at Bowwood, and a broken bridge among the groves of Sion. And for a while the Scoto-classic style brooded like a nightmare over the town. And if you came across a peculiarly gloomy and depressing building, like that Paymaster-General's Office next the Horse Guards, you may give a guess that it was the work of the Brothers Adams.

Yet the Adelphi itself is not so bad. Building with their own money, and their own bricks and mortar, these "brither Scots" managed better than in adapting the Parthenon for a nobleman's residence, or in placing my lord and his lackeys to sleep behind a screen of tall Ionic columns. For the Adelphi was a private speculation of the brothers, begun in the year 1768 and built upon the site of old Durham Yard, then but an unsightly heap of ruins. Here had formerly stood the thatched stables and outhouses of Durham House, the residence of the princely prelates of that richest of all the wealthy sees of England. In the plan were wharves, arcades, and entrances to the subterraneous streets and warehouses of the Adelphi, forming those dark arches, which had but an indifferent reputation during the early part of the present century. The arches are now all enclosed, and within are spacious vaults for the warehousing of merchandise—and above rises the Royal Terrace, with a pleasant railed promenade in front, overlooking the graceful bend of the river, with the towers, palaces, temples, and theatres that rise from its banks. And here, leaning over the railings, we may see in the mind's eye worthy Dr. Johnson and his scratch wig, and the faithful Boswell, who have just visited widow Garrick, and are talking, or, at least, the doctor is talking regretfully of the days that are no more, and of that brilliant coterie of friends in which David Garrick was ever a prominent figure. For it was in the Terrace, in the centre house, not wanting in a certain full-bottomed dignity, that Garrick lived the last years of his life—dying, indeed, in the back room on the first floor—and there his widow lived, too, till she died, long after her husband. So that the veteran author and dramatist, E. L. Blanchard, who has only recently joined the majority, who was also long an inhabitant of the Terrace, used to tell of his having, as a boy, actually met and spoken with the venerable dame.

David Garrick took much interest, it

may be said, in the building of the Adelphi, and, according to Mr. Wheatley ("The Adelphi and its Site"), he obtained from its builders the promise of the shop at the corner of Adam Street, facing the Strand, for his friend Andrew Beckett the bookseller, undertaking to make the shop "a rendezvous of wit and fashion." The shop is still in existence, but no longer a bookseller's, and "wit and fashion" no longer assemble about a bookseller's counter, reading and tasting new books, and buying them too, at times, as was the old and laudable custom.

We may guess from John Street, the Christian-name of one of the brothers, and assume that he was the eldest; for, after the Terrace, John Street is the most important part of the Adelphi, as it contains the house of the Society of Arts, which was designed and erected for its present tenants. And here we see the brothers at their best. Those flat pilasters of theirs and the ornamental plaques do really break the lines of brick and mortar with a quite pleasant effect. And the buildings represent for us, too, a distinct age—the age of Reynolds and Johnson, of Garrick and Goldsmith, and one would be sorry to see them replaced by gigantic mountains of masonry of the modern type. Then we have a Robert Street, after another brother. Robert was a great traveller, and brought home ideas from Greece and Rome, and even from the ruins of Palmyra. Then there was, probably, a younger brother James, for there is a younger brother in the way of a street that bears his name. The youngest of the firm was, perhaps, a failure, for we find not a street dedicated to his memory.

Yet it is curious, if you come to think of it, that all these streets, from Charing Cross to the Savoy, bear a kind of history in their names. One might make anagrams with them, or acrostics, or perhaps find a cryptogram—remembering that Lord Bacon was once busy in the neighbourhood—a secret cypher that should prove us all in the wrong, and show us that Buckinghambury and the Adelphi were really built by "the Lord knows who."

MIDNIGHT COURAGE.

THE high estimation in which the great Napoleon held what he called "two o'clock in the morning courage," is only another

instance of his shrewd and accurate knowledge of human nature. He placed in the front rank of the truly valorous the man who can face, with equanimity, the insidious inroads which the enemies of mental peace always make in the dead of night.

The First Consul himself, it is well known, was a shining illustration of such power, and, although it might be expected that, as courage is the stock-in-trade—the commodity in which he deals, and on which he relies for success—every General would be a good judge of the various degrees in its quality, we are not aware that so accurate and tersely expressed a valuation of the attribute has ever been made before by soldier, sage, or scientist.

Few can doubt that the Corsican hero was perfectly right in putting midnight courage at the top of the tree; and none will ever question its claim to the position for a moment, who have ever suffered from wakefulness. Albeit there are not many, if any, witnesses of our bravery, it is none the less a matter of congratulation to us if we possess the power of defying the assaults of the terrors of silence and darkness. Innumerable are the shapes they take. The wakeful man, however, knows them all too well, for the very nervous exhaustion which mainly creates insomnia, lays him open to the attacks of gloomy and depressing thought. Great, indeed, is the self-control, the courage necessary for their defeat.

It is bad enough to lie with open eyes, staring into the blackness of our room, or at the dim prospect revealed by the feeble night-light, when they ought to be closed in sweet oblivion. It is bad enough, we say, to do this even with a calm and unperturbed mind; but when, in addition to the loss of rest it involves, we are beset by every conceivable and inconceivable kind of foreboding, by every imaginable care, worry, and distress; when each and all become extravagantly exaggerated, the sleepless night is surely one of the most exhausting and fearful experiences which our artificial life brings about.

Modern civilisation has much to answer for, and this is not one of the least counts against it, for, to the stress and strain, the helter-skelter pace at which the business of existence is carried on nowadays, is chiefly due the vast increase, as doctors tell us, of sleeplessness. Six or eight people out of every dozen beyond the age of forty with whom one compares notes on the

point, are suffering, or have suffered from it more or less; and, perhaps, three or four out of the dozen have to resort, as they tell you, to remedies which, in the end, they find produce worse consequences than the disease. Not two out of the dozen, most likely, will lay claim to Napoleon's courage, and tell you that they find insomnia very wearying, and nothing more. The majority, if pressed, admit their cowardice, and, if you describe in detail what you yourself know about it, you can see, by the expression of the listener's face, that his experiences are identical.

Possibly "you go to bed," you say—quoting an able writer on the subject—"about eleven p.m., feeling tired, and in a few minutes are steeped in forgetfulness. Suddenly, however, you awake—broadly, widely awake—with a sense that you have had a good, long night's rest, and that it must be quite time to get up. But the room is still dark; all is perfectly quiet; not a sound outside or in. What is this? What does it mean? You strike a light and look at your watch, to discover that you have been asleep an hour; it is only a little past midnight. Then the horrible truth bursts upon you; you know your time has come—your coward's hour. Possibly you have awakened even with a vague dread already upon you, and which henceforth claims you for its own, until your depressed vitality recovers somewhat its normal condition. Meanwhile, your heart is beating like a sledge-hammer, and to sit upright in bed, or get up and walk about, becomes your only resource."

Then you describe another phase of insomnia. The night is more advanced ere you reach the climax of misery in its acutest form. "You must sleep till about half-past two or three a.m., and then rouse up rather slowly with a dim consciousness of the terrors awaiting you. You try to cooet yourself, and to do nothing to prevent your falling off again. You keep your eyes shut, and lie perfectly still, knowing, by sad experience, what is before you if you have not the luck to drop off again soon; but it is of no use. You do not drop off again; and the longer you lie, the more wide-awake and uncomfortable you become. Finally, you give it up, and are obliged to turn over on your back, to encounter with all their force the demoniac fancies incidental to that abject period."

The French philosopher, Rabelais,

declares "the greatest loss of time that I know, is to count the hours;" and demands, with acerbity: "What good comes of it?" Well, assuredly not much. But who, under the circumstances just alluded to, can help counting, not only the hours, but the actual minutes?

At first, however, you are generally too depressed, your courage is at too low an ebb to allow of your doing anything but groan audibly, as the phantoms, increasing in number and size, make such rapid assaults upon your intelligence and common sense, that in a short while you approach the condition of an idiot. The climax of your misery, as is suggested in this case, dawns gradually, and culminates only after one has been awake some five or ten minutes.

There is, however, yet another stage of consciousness by which it is attained. It comes about quite suddenly, indeed, in a flash, as it were, and as you awake, the full force and terror of the coward's hour is at once upon you. A vague dream, more or less horrible, in which you are struggling for your life, or are slipping down a yawning chasm, or over a frightful precipice into the sea, or into a bottomless pit, brings you with a cry bolt upright in bed before you are awake. But being so, you sink back exhausted instantly with shattered nerves, and a fear in your very soul which makes you shiver. The fact that it is only a dream is fully grasped, of course, but it in no wise gives your common sense the requisite strength to assert itself, or prevent its effect telling. You have had a fright, and cannot get over it. The fiends have the upper hand of you again, and are in full cry, for there is such a silence in this "dead waste and middle" of the night, that their phantom yells mingle and combine to make up that deafening buzzing in your ears.

By the same token, the darkness enveloping the room offers a favourable background, whereon the children of your idle brain disport themselves in all their fantastic hideousness before your wide-open, staring eyes. The fancy that the chamber is peopled with shapeless, but terrible things, is not easily beaten back. The bead on your brow suggests the idea that some ghastly fever-fiend has seized you, and that before morning you will be dead. As this notion gains credence, you question the advisability at once of ringing the bell and sending for a doctor. To arouse the house and say you are

dangerously ill would be easy, and there is a strong impulse to do so. But reason begins to resist it, and an effort is made to recover calm. Successful at length more or less in this direction, your ideas nevertheless act in the most irrational fashion. True, the wild train of phantom forms has vanished, and has given place to matters of every-day occurrence. That business in the city, that picture on the easel, that half-finished article on the desk, the vital importance of that appointment to be kept—these and kindred items, to say nothing of absolute trumpery trifles which make up man's existence, and occupy his waking hours, now take distorted shapes and exaggerated dimensions. You foresee nothing will go right. The business must inevitably fail, the picture will be rejected, the manuscript cannot be finished in time, the negotiation to be carried out at the appointment will fall through—there is no spark of hope, no rift in the gloom.

Thus, and in a thousand similar ways, the coward's hour is triumphantly realised. Lucky will it be for the sufferer if the hour does not extend to two or three, for all things are favourable to its continuance. The nights are probably at their longest, the morning is yet far distant, that same darkness and that same silence still act and react upon the brain. Deeply impressive as it is profoundly solemn, thoughts may now beset us—thoughts too deep for words. Our past, besides our present, rises vividly into the picture, and all the regretful sadness inseparable from retrospect adds its weight to our feeling of despair, and haply of remorse. From this our weary mind takes but one bound to that appalling future—that dread eternity, the great mystery, the great secret. To what is this life tending? What is the object of it all? Very strong must be the resolution necessary to quell those questioning doubts to which each human soul is at some time subjected. And thus the poor victim runs through the whole gamut of awe-inspiring gloom and despondency.

Delineate your troubles on these and similar lines, and you are pretty sure to obtain the sympathy of your listener—a sympathy begotten of his own experiences. You both then conscientiously feel that whatever may be your natural bearing by day, however much aside and swagger you may assume in your intercourse with mankind, whatever character for bravery you may have acquired, you are an impostor,

to a great extent a sham, for you are devoid of two o'clock in the morning courage. Be but candid, and here is the conclusion.

A valiant few, a very few, there are, no doubt, who, in the forefront of this battle, go through it without blenching, without so much as an additional pulsation, and coming through it victoriously, have a right to claim the honourable distinction of the Victoria Cross; men whose health and nerves are sternest steel, and yet with women's hearts. Some others, too, go through the ordeal unscathed; but they, if more numerous, are of very different mould, people who have but little beyond their philosophy and stoicism wherewith to arm themselves or to recommend them for promotion. Envidable beings in one sense, perhaps they are; but only in one, for their immunity from hurt is purchased at a heavy cost—the cost of total indifference to the feelings and sufferings of their fellow-soldiers. Selfish creatures, who can lift themselves to the attitude of Carlyle's Teufelsdröckh, and calmly survey the grim spectacle of the battle-field without emotion, thus:

Teufelsdröckh, sitting at ease in the attic room which commanded the great city, is represented by his biographer as watching its life-circulation, its "wax-laying, and honey-making, and poison-brewing, and choking by sulphur." "Ach, mein Lieber," so once, at midnight, he confides to a friend when engaged in rather earnest talk, "it is a true sublimity to dwell here." . . . "The stifled hum of midnight when traffic has lain down to rest, and the chariot-wheels of vanity, still rolling here and there through distant streets, are bearing her to halls roofed in and lighted to the due pitch for her; and only vice and misery, to prowl or to moan like night-birds, are abroad; that hum, I say, like the stertorous, unquiet slumber of sick life, is heard in heaven. Oh, under that hideous coverlet of vapours and putrefactions and unimaginable gases, what a fermenting vat lies simmering and hid. The joyful and the sorrowful are there! Men are dying there; men are being born; men are praying. On the other side of a brick partition, men are cursing, and around them all is the vast, void night. . . . Upwards of five hundred thousand two-legged animals, without feathers, lie around us in horizontal positions; their heads all in nightcaps, and full of the foolishest dreams. Riot cries aloud, and staggers

and swaggers in his rank dens of shame ; and the mother, with streaming hair, kneels over her pallid, dying infant, whose cracked lips only her tears now moisten ; all these heaped and huddled together, with nothing but a little carpentry and masonry between them—crammed in like salted fish in their barrel ; or weltering, shall I say, like an Egyptian pitcher of tamed vipers, each struggling to get its head above the others. Such work goes on under that smoke counterpane. But I, mein Werther, I sit above it all ; I am alone with the stars !”

Doubtless a “true sublimity” to dwell at such a height, and to be able thus to philosophise about it all. Still, can the courage it betokens be justly esteemed other than the courage of indifference ? And is the courage of indifference real courage ? Is the man who knows no fear truly courageous ? We doubt it. But this is a question too wide for discussion here. Meanwhile, to sit alone with the stars in the cynical spirit of *Teufelsdröckh* is a privilege, we think, happily not given to the majority. These must suffer, must feel and bleed with the rest ; and, feeling and suffering with the rest, it is from their ranks alone, we hold, that will step out to the front the very few who can claim the right, on the Napoleonic principle, to wear upon their breast that noble badge, whose proud, yet simple, motto is, “For Valour.”

“NOBLESSE OBLIGE.”

“NOBLESSE OBLIGE,” of course it does. How can it help doing so, if you are a *De Vere*, for instance, and can trace your pedigree all the way to Noah, including such minor celebrities as *Meleager*, who slew the *Calydonian boar* ; *Diomedes*, who fought at *Troy* ; *Verus*, “so named from his true dealing,” who was baptized by *Saint Marcellus*, A.D. 41 ; and the Duke of *Angers*, *Charlemagne’s* brother-in-law ? Think of one who belongs to such a stock doing anything mean or commonplace.

But people do not always do what, in Cornish phrase, they “belong to do ;” very far from it. Look through a book like the *Duchess of Cleveland’s* “*Battle Abbey Roll*.” There is every name occurring in any of the extant lists, and many that do not occur at all ; and, of tragic histories ; of black, ugly treasons ; of things which make us ashamed of human nature ; why,

these brief records contain almost as many as of things to be proud of.

Few need to be reminded that there is no “*Battle Abbey Roll*.” Some say there never was one. Those who believe in it insist that, at the dissolution, it was carried to *Cowdray*, then owned by the Catholic and most ill-fated family of *Browne*, and there burnt, with heaps of other priceless records, in 1793, just when the heir of the house was drowned, along with young *Mr. Burdett*, in madly trying to swim the *Rhine Falls* of *Laufenberg*. The existing lists are *Leland’s*, *Holinshed’s*, and *Duchesne’s*. *Leland* was the father of all pedestrian tourists ; footed it over nearly all England, visiting the just suppressed—in some cases, not yet dis-furnished—monasteries. He came to *Battle*, and gives a catalogue of the monks’ library, for he was curious in books, and was always bemoaning the loss to learning through the dispersion and destruction of these libraries. But he does not mention a roll, nor say whence he got the list that he gives. If *Holinshed*, historian of *Henry the Eighth*, and *Duchesne*, give approximately true copies—and they are very like one another except in spelling—*Leland’s*, in which the names are strung together in rhymes, must be from another source. Of course spelling doesn’t count. *Holinshed* and *Duchesne* would employ scribes ; and these would not be likely to conscientiously distinguish between *S* and *C*, and *C* and *G*, and *M* and *W*, or to reflect that *G* and *W* are used indiscriminately, as *Walter* or *Gaultier*.

Black letter probably had, for a copyist of *Queen Elizabeth’s* day, more traps and pitfalls than it would have for most of those who take it in hand nowadays. Then, though we need not go as far as *Sir Egerton Brydges*, who calls the “*Battle Abbey Roll*” a “disgusting forgery,” even those who believe in it most firmly, own that names did get put in every now and then. The monks could easily manage this ; and, in days when money could buy a man out of purgatory, no wonder it was powerful enough to buy him into “the Roll.” On any assumption, however, the list contains the foremost of our old families ; and one who should go to work with it as *Mr. Froude* did with *Irish history*—pick out all the crimes and serve them up with suitable garnishing—might prove the *Anglo-Norman* “families” to be as bad a set as the world has ever seen.

The fair way is to take the good and

bad, and then, if we strike a balance, we shall see that gentle and simple are pretty much of a muchness. Each class has its own temptations, and is less open to those which beset the other class.

"There's a deal of human nature in us all," says Artemus Ward; and if you or I had been Lord Stanley, in 1521, we should have thought it quite natural to hate the Butlers of Warrington, because they would not give in in the matter of the ford over the Mersey; though, I trust, we should not have let our hatred carry us to such wicked lengths. Stanley, like Ahab, could not rest till he had got rid of his enemy, Sir John Butler. His neighbours—Walter Savage and Sir Piers Leigh, a priest—took sides with him, and, between them, they bribed Butler's servants. Butler was in bed, in his moated house, at Bewsey; his porter set a lamp in the window to guide the murderers, who crossed in leather boats. The serving-man let them in, but the chamberlain—the Bodleian MS., which tells the story, says he was a negro—made fight and was slain, but not till he had helped a faithful nurse to wrap up Butler's baby boy in her apron and run off with him. "To the serving-man they paid a great reward, and he, coming away with them, they hanged him on a tree in Bewsey Park." "Sir John's wife, being in London, did dream the same night that her husband was slain, and that Bewsey Hall did swim with blood; whereupon she presently came homewards, and heard by the way the report of his death." She afterwards married the Lord Grey, on condition that he should cause her to be avenged on the murderers; "but he, making her suit void, she parted from him, and came into Lancashire, saying: 'If my lord will not let me have my will of my enemies, yet shall my body be buried with him I lost.' And she caused a tomb of alabaster to be made, where she lieth on the right side of her husband, Sir John Boteler." The murderers were never brought to justice; no one cared to prove that the head of the powerful house of Stanley had done such a deed. The churchman Sir Piers was sentenced in the Bishop's Court to build a church at Dingley; but the laymen got off scot-free. So much for cruelty; of fidelity there are some noble examples, and some just the reverse.

Several astronomers say that the moon has no influence on the weather, and that after hundreds of observations they have

found as many continuations of the same weather after a change of moon as they have changes.

So you might argue of noble blood. The Bonvilles, for instance—written Bondeville in the Roll (their name-place is Bondeville Castle, Normandy)—a great family in Somerset and Devon, stuck to their colours during the Wars of the Roses, and "withered with the white rose." In two months three generations were cut down. Lord Bonville of Chuton saw his son and grandson killed at Wakefield; and a month later he was beheaded. Margaret hated him because he was one of the Barons in whose custody Henry the Sixth was placed after Northampton. He had him in charge at the second battle of Saint Albans; and when the King's other keepers fled to their party, he surrendered, "on the King's assuring him he should receive no bodily hurt." Her husband's promises had little weight with Margaret; and "she rested not till she had taken off his head." The only survivor of the family was a great-grandchild, in her own right Baroness of Bonville and Harrington, and by her mother a Neville. She was a King's ward; and Edward the Fourth married her to Elizabeth Woodville's eldest son, Grey, Marquis of Dorset, so that she was Lady Jane Grey's great-grandmother.

The Bourchiers, from Boursseres, in Burgundy, veered round at the right moment. One of them married Anne Plantagenet, daughter of Thomas, Edward the Third's youngest son. Henry the Fifth made him Earl of Eu in Normandy; and his sons were zealous Lancastrians, one of them holding the Archbishopric of Canterbury for thirty-two years, having been nineteen years Bishop of Ely, "the like not to be paralleled in any other dignity of the Church before nor since." The eldest was bribed by the Duke of York, who gave him to wife his sister Elizabeth, Edward the Fourth's aunt, "in the firm hope that he and his generation should be a perpetual aid to the Duke and his sequele, and associate together in all chance of fortune." Besides a wife, the Duke gave him promises which Edward by-and-by fulfilled. He was made Lord Ramsey, and Earl of Essex; he got Lord Ross's forfeited castles in Northumberland, and Lord Devon's Buckinghamshire manors, and Lord Wiltshire's in Essex, Cambridge, and Lancashire. Moreover, as he had brought over with him all his brothers, even young

Lord Bernery, who had been by Henry the Fourth made a Knight of the Garter for his bravery at Saint Albans, Edward, "in recompense of the charge he had been at in his services, granted him license to transport sixteen hundred woollen clothes of his proper goods, or any others, without any account or customs for the same"—gave him, in fact, a monopoly of the woollen trade. Of fidelity to King and faith, Blundell of Crosby in Lancashire is a notable instance. His "note-book" is as interesting as Mrs. Hutchinson's memoirs. At fifteen, being an orphan, he was by his grandfather married to a daughter of Sir Thomas Haggerston of that ilk in Northumberland. "You will remember," he writes years after to his mother-in-law, "what a pretty, straight young thing, all dashing in scarlet, I came to Haggerston." In Charles's army he became a captain of Dragoons, and had his thigh shattered at an attack in Lancaster. Thus, at twenty-two, he became a cripple for life, his lands were sequestered, and, as he expresses it, "I was confined to my plundered bare walls and a pair of crutches; but it was for the noblest cause in the world." Four times was he imprisoned during the Commonwealth, once for ten weeks "in a loathsome dungeon," in Liverpool. Twice he paid ransom. At last he never ventured near his house for fear of being again apprehended. His wife and sister had charge of Crosby, and so persecuted were they by domiciliary visits of soldiers, who took all they could lay hands on, that the poor ladies had to buy their bread from meal to meal. In 1653 Blundell was allowed to compound for his estate, that is, to buy back his life interest in it with money lent by friends; but he was forced to pay up arrears of Crown-rent due for recusancy (he was a Catholic). The bill for these, some of them dating back to Elizabeth, a roll twenty feet long, is still shown at Crosby. The worst is that Charles the Second treated him with characteristic ingratitude, accentuated by the fact that he was "a Papist," and therefore unpopular in those days of sham Popish plots. The recusancy fines were still exacted, and in 1679 he was disgusted to find "my trusty sword taken from me (which has been my companion when I lost my limbs, my lands, my liberty, for acting against the rebels in the King's behalf) by an officer appointed for the purpose who, in that former old war, had been a captain against the King." Ten

years later he was thrown into prison; a poor reward for all his sacrifices, and certainly not the way to open his mind to conviction.

Of faithlessness a type is Banister of Lacon, who betrayed Buckingham to Edward the Third. "A servant," he is called in the histories; "not that he was a menial, being of ancient family and plentiful estate, but that he was in the retinue of the great Duke. Buckingham was disguised, and digging a ditch, when Banister set the sheriff upon him, whereat, kneeling down, he solemnly imprecated vengeance on the traitor and his posterity, which curses were signally fulfilled; for shortly after he had betrayed his master his son waxed mad, and so died in a boar's sty; his eldest daughter, of excellent beauty, was suddenly stricken with a foul leprosy; his second son very marvellously deformed of his limbs and made decrepit; his younger son, in a small puddle, was strangled and drowned." So says Hall, the chronicler, adding that "he himself, in extreme old age, was found guilty of another murder, and by his clergy saved. Anyhow, his family grew ashamed of him, and his name appears in none of the pedigrees. The family is either named from a village near Etampes, or else is Balweater, master of the baths: the arms are two water buckets.

Another man of old descent, of whom his family was ashamed, was Francis Colonel Charteris, of the house of Chartres, which is entered on the Divis Roll, and the head of which held lands in Leicestershire, in 1086, and in Wilts and Huntingdon, in 1297; and of which the Scotch branch were first noted as long back as the reign of Malcolm Canmore. He became, in the beginning of the last century, so infamous that his cousin preferred to merge her name in her husband's, though he was called Hogg, and though she lost family property by so doing. The epitaph, written for Colonel Francis Charteris, is a contrast to epitaphs in general. "With an inflexible constancy he persisted, in spite of age and infirmity, in the practice of every human vice except prodigality and hypocrisy; his indefatigable avarice exempting him from the first and his matchless impudence from the latter." By cheating on the race-course and the gambling-table—"though often detected and severely chastised—he created a ministerial estate, without trust of public money, bribe, service, trade, or profession.

Think not his life useless to mankind. Providence connived at his execrable designs to prove of how small estimation exorbitant wealth is held in the sight of the Almighty."

The Colonel—immortalised by Hogarth—found his second grandson, Francis Wemys, more accommodating than his cousin. He let himself be called Charteris on condition of getting his grandfather's ill-gotten gains.

Less repulsive than Charteris—only because force is less repulsive than fraud—must have been that Fulk de Breanté, whose chief stronghold was Bedford Castle; while from his lesser fortress of Luton he terrified the neighbouring Dunstable. But when, quarrelling with the monks of Saint Albans about a wood, he pounced down on them, and carrying off thirty, shut them up in Bedford Castle, he dreamed that from Saint Albans tower a huge stone fell on him, crushing all his bones, and, crying out in sleep, awoke his wife. She, pious lady, said it was a plain proof that Saint Alban was wroth, and bade him release the monks, and get reconciled to the Saint. "Whereupon he rode to Saint Albans, and besought leave to ask pardon of the Convent in Chapter. The Abbot consented, admiring to see such lamb-like humility in a wolf. Wherefore, putting off his apparel, Fulk entered the Chapter-house, bearing a rod, which he handed to the Abbot, confessing his fault. But when from every one of the monks he had received a lash on his naked body, he put on his clothes again, and went and sat by the Abbot, and said: 'This my wife hath caused me to do for a dream; but if you require restitution of what I then took, I will not hearken to you.' And so departed; the monks rejoicing to be so rid of him without doing them any more mischief." But though he could bully the Church, he found the State too much for him.

In 1224, he carried off Henry of Braybroke, "one of the King's justices, then itinerant at Dunstable," and put him in dungeon at Bedford. Even Henry the Third could not stand this; and King, and Archbishop, and chief nobles attacked the castle "with petrorias, mangonillas, and tall wooden towers." After four months, the keep, which still held out, was set on fire. Fulk's brother was executed, and his castle dismantled. He had escaped to Wales, whence very soon he came to Court, under protection of the Bishop of Coventry, and was pardoned, but banished, that he might go on pilgrimage to Rome. Here he got

full absolution, and was on his way home, when he suddenly died. Had he returned he would have been far from welcome, for his pious wife, Margaret de Redvous, had been seeking a divorce—she was a widowed heiress, married to him, sorely against her will, by King John; to whom, of course, Fulk paid a substantial "commission" for this profitable match. Some say Vauxhall is named from this Fulk's town-house.

D'Oily of Oxford, though a far greater noble, and William the Conqueror's Constable, was far less able to cope with the Church than De Breanté. A meadow, belonging to the Abingdon monks, lay temptingly under his castle. He annexed it, and forthwith dreamed that, being in presence of the Queen of Heaven, she had frowned on him, and had bidden two Abingdon monks to take him to the meadow which he had usurped. Therein he saw a bevy of ugly children making hay, who cried, "Here is our friend, let us play with him." But the hay that they threw on him burned his beard and hair, and scorched and suffocated him, so that he cried to his wife, "I have been among devils." He had to make solemn restitution, and to give the Manor of Tadmerton and one hundred pounds in money. His wife was a Saxon heiress, Ealghitha.

The Burdetts, ancestors of Sir Francis, "the pride of Westminster and England's glory," who spent ninety thousand pounds in his Middlesex elections alone, and of the wisely benevolent Baroness, have their share of grim stories. The brothers Bourdet came over; William, descendant of one of whom (1160), "being valiant and devout went to the Holy Land; and his steward, soliciting the chastity of his lady, and being resisted with much scorn, grew so full of envie towards her, that he went to meet his master; and, to shadow his own crime, complained to him of her looseness with others. Which false charge so enraged her husband that, when he came home, and that she approached to receive him with joyful embraces, he forthwith mortally stabbed her. To expiate which unhappy act, after he understood it, he built Ameth Priory."

Every child has read of Thomas Burdett, son of Sir Nicholas, Great Butler of Normandy, and ravager of French towns; and how, when King Edward the Fourth had killed a white bull in his park at Arrow, "he passionately wished the horns in his belly, that had moved the King so to do." For this saying he was convicted

of high treason, beheaded at Tyburn, crying, "Ecce morior, cum nihil horum fecerim," and affirming he had a bird in his bosom (a good conscience) that did sing comfort to him. Is there any memorial to him in the Grey Friars' Church (Christ's Hospital), where he was buried, and where his epitaph was "Armiger Dmi. Georgii Ducis Clarencie"? His dying words refer to the charge of "Poisoning, sorcery, and enchantment," brought against him, and other followers of Clarence, by his implacable brother.

Such is a sample of the histories called to mind by the "Battle Abbey Roll." Almost every name has its stories. Some grave, some gay, and not a bit more or less creditable to human nature, considering the times they refer to, than stories which might be gathered about a company of plebeians.

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Count Paolo's Ring," "All Hallow's Eve," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

It was a bright August morning, and the sun was shining on the little strip of "God's Acre" which surrounded the ivy-covered village church, and a soft south wind was rustling among the leaves of the trees, and blowing the pink and white petals of the roses in the Vicarage garden over the low, grassy mounds. A couple of terriers were chasing each other across the grass; a hen, which had just laid an egg in a quiet corner, was clucking in noisy pride; while an old sheep, which had strayed in from the lane, lazily munched the short, sweet grass; and a blackbird's song mingled pleasantly with the rustle of the leaves and the ripple of the brook outside the low wall.

The church door stood open, and the school children, who sat close by it, shuffled their feet, and fidgeted in their seats, and cast many a longing look outside, and envied the old clerk sitting in the porch, cool and comfortable, and more than half asleep in his shady corner. It was very hot inside the church; so hot that half the congregation were nodding drowsily in their high-backed pews, while the other half listened with greater or less degrees of impatience to the Vicar's droning voice, and longed ardently for the moment of release.

It seemed long in coming to all, especially long to Paul Beaumont, who was not a church-goer as a rule, and had only consented—not without many inward misgivings—to accompany his host and hostess that morning, out of a sense of duty, and had spent the time occupied by the service in regretting his weakness, and envying Sir John Butler, who was sleeping somewhat noisily in the corner of his pew. Lady Cecil sat by his side, beautifully dressed, and languidly graceful as usual, and serenely disdainful of everything and everybody.

There had been a time—not so very many years ago—when the mere fact of being in her presence, the touch of her dress, the slow, sweet smile which now and then the violet eyes would turn upon him, would have set Paul Beaumont's heart throbbing with wild delight. But that was some years ago, when she was beautiful, portionless, Lady Cecil Stewart, and he was the younger son of a country squire, with nothing but a handsome face and a long pedigree to recommend him to notice; and Lady Cecil, not without some tears and regrets, had done her duty, and taken her wares to a better market, and carried off one of the best matches of the season—honest Sir John Butler, who was immensely rich and good-natured, if somewhat stupid and dull, and whom she ruled with a rod of iron.

Times had changed, too, for Paul. By the unexpected death of a cousin he had succeeded to Oaklands, a large estate in Devonshire, soon after Lady Cecil's marriage. This unexpected change in his circumstances gave him the means of indulging his taste for travel and adventure. He had spent the last five years in wandering in foreign countries, and had come back bronzed and bearded; and—or at least so Lady Cecil secretly thought—handsomer and more attractive than ever.

She had met him in London in May, and had given him an invitation to come to Chesham Hall in August. Paul had accepted it with some slight reluctance. He had loved Lady Cecil passionately once; her marriage had been a great blow to him, and now, that time and change of scene had deadened the pain and healed the wound, he was reluctant to run the risk of a return of his old malady. But after the first few days of his visit were over, he told himself, cynically, that he need not have been afraid. There was no danger! Lady Cecil was as handsome—some said hand-

somer—than ever; but her beauty was powerless now to awaken the old passion in his heart, or to blind his eyes to her selfishness and vanity.

Was this affected fine lady really the woman whom he had once set so high; who had seemed to him so far above all others? he wondered; of whom he had thought with such tender regret and bitter longing during many a long, silent night, spent under the stars in some lonely place, while his dusky servants slept around him and he kept watch alone! He could scarcely believe it, or be too hard upon himself, and his blindness, or feel too compassionate towards Sir John.

He had promised to remain a fortnight at Chesham Hall; but although only three days of his visit were over, he was already beginning to feel a little tired of it, and was casting about in his mind for some excuse to shorten it. Lady Cecil, sitting by his side, with her slim hands folded over her Prayer-book, little guessed at the thoughts which were passing through his mind, as he fidgeted in his corner, and yawned, and pulled his beard, and looked round at the sleepy, uninterested faces of the rustics. How very stolid and uninteresting they were, he thought, contemptuously. Stay, there was one exception, and that belonged to a tall, slight boy of one or two-and-twenty, who sat in the Vicarage pew, immediately below the pulpit.

The pew apportioned for the use of the family at the Hall was in the chancel, and, being large and square, occupied the greater portion of it; and any one sitting there had, if they chose, a full view of the faces of the congregation; and Paul, in his idle, meditative way, occupied the last portion of the sermon by studying the boy's face. Something in it seemed strangely familiar to him; but, beside this, it was worth looking at, with its delicate, refined features, bright, dark eyes, and sensitive mouth, as well as for the contrast it presented to the stolid faces around it; and also to that of the lady, sitting in the same pew, whom Paul knew to be the Vicar's wife.

Paul looked at her quiet, colourless face, and straight, thin lips, and wondered what relation she was to the bright-eyed, mobile-faced lad by her side.

"Is she his mother? And if so, what strange freak of nature has given such a son to the commonplace Vicar and his wife?" he wondered.

He noticed by-and-by that the boy's dark eyes were constantly wandering to the further end of the church; upwards to the loft, over the west door, where the organ was, and the choir sat. Paul's eyes, following these glances, soon found out their object—a pale, fair girl, who acted as organist, and who had consequently sat with her back turned to the congregation, during the earlier part of the service.

She was quite a young girl, not more than sixteen or seventeen, and she sat with her hands clasped on her knee, and her eyes demurely downcast, studying her hymn-book, apparently quite unconscious of the two pair of eyes which were resting on her face. By-and-by she raised her head and looked up, and Paul saw that the long lashes which he had been admiring veiled a pair of magnificent dark-grey eyes, full of fire and brilliancy. He saw, too, that the brows above were dark, and finely drawn; that the chestnut hair was swept back in a thick, bright roll from the white brow, and gathered in a great knot low on her neck, under her shabby, little bonnet.

"Why, what sweet eyes!" Paul thought, as he gazed at her; "and what lovely hair!" and quite forgot to notice, in his admiration of eyes and hair, that the rest of the face was far from being as perfect in form and colour as the beautiful face by his side.

As he looked, the girl suddenly became conscious either of his glance, or of that directed towards her from the Vicarage pew. Paul could not tell which. Probably the latter, he told himself, grimly; and a lovely flush swept over her face, and her eyes grew bright and starry, and then hid themselves demurely under the thick veil of her eyelashes. Paul smiled in his lazy, sarcastic way. Had he stumbled on a village idyl, on a boy-and-girl love-story? he wondered.

The service was over at last; Lady Cecil gathered up her scent-bottle, handkerchief, and gloves, and followed Sir John slowly down the aisle to the porch. It was not etiquette in Chesham for any of the congregation to leave their seats before the "quality" had set the example; and so, much to Paul's disappointment, he was obliged to follow Lady Cecil out of the church, and into the bright sunshine, without another glimpse of the fair face, which had now retired with its owner behind the red-baize curtain which veiled the organ from profane eyes.

"Well, Mr. Beaumont, were you very much bored?" Lady Cecil asked, in her slow voice, as she walked by his side up the churchyard. "I think the Vicar was, if possible, a degree more prosy than usual this morning."

"Prosy? Not at all, not at all, my lady," Sir John interrupted, cheerfully. "Capital sermon, I thought. Full of common sense and—and all that sort of thing, eh, Beaumont? I didn't think it prosy, by any means; but women can never appreciate common sense!"

My lady gave the slightest possible shrug of her dainty shoulders.

"Perhaps, if I possessed your happy faculty for sleep, Sir John, I might set as high a value upon Mr. Ainslie's orations as you do," she said, listlessly.

"Sleep! Why you don't mean to say I was asleep," and Sir John opened his eyes wide, and looked the picture of injured and astonished innocence. "Wouldn't sleep in church on any account, my lady; sets a bad example to the parish! Why, why," and Sir John paused and struck his stick vigorously on the path to emphasize his words, "we should have all the boys and girls in the congregation sleeping if they caught me at it! No, no; we can't have that sort of thing in my parish!"

My lady gave a little disdainful smile, and a glance at the tall, broad figure that was sauntering by her side, with his head bent a little forward, and his hands clasped behind his back. He smiled also.

"Rank has its drawbacks as well as its privileges, Sir John," he said, gravely. "I never knew how great those drawbacks were until I came here, and learnt from your bright and shining example how great and manifold are the responsibilities which rest on the shoulders of a country squire! Doesn't some poet or other speak of 'the fierce light that shines on Kings,' Lady Cecil? I quite dread the idea of going to Oaklands and having my actions criticised and viewed by the blaze of that 'fierce light.'"

Sir John stared at him.

"Eh? What are you talking about, Beaumont? No, no, my dear," this to a little blue-eyed child who opened the churchyard gate for him, and then came forward and shyly held out her hand in expectation of the penny which usually rewarded a similar action, "it is Sunday, you know. We don't give pennies on Sundays; I'll remember you to-morrow—

or stay," for the disappointed look on the child's face touched Sir John's heart, and banished his Sabbatarian scruples, "perhaps you had better have it now; I might forget. Here it is; but," and he shook his head gravely, "you must remember your commandment for the future. It says do no manner of work, you know; neither opening gates, nor anything else. Mind you ask Miss Doris to teach it to you. By the way, my lady"—Sir John always called his wife "my lady"—Lady Cecil was too formal, Cecil too familiar, so he made a compromise between the two—"did you notice how pretty Doris looked this morning? She grows more like her mother every day."

"You forget I did not know her mother."

"No, no; of course not. I ought to have remembered that you were a child in the nursery when poor Doris died," he said, apologetically; "but I remember her when she was the prettiest girl in the country side, and the most admired and sought after. She could count her lovers by the dozen, and to think that out of them all she should choose Francis Cairnes, the biggest scamp that ever wore shoe leather, or won a woman's heart only to break it by his neglect and cruelty," Sir John cried explosively, and with another dig of his stick on the gravel. "But there! there is no accounting for the perversity of a woman's taste! Eh, Beaumont? I must confess I never could understand the sex."

"Wiser men than you or I have come to the same conclusion, Sir John," Beaumont answered with a lazy twinkle in his eyes and a lazy glance at my lady's scornful face; "but as in that incomprehensiveness lies their chief charm, I for one am content to remain in ignorance. I noticed the young lady—she sat in the organ loft, did she not?—of whom you are speaking. She is pretty—very pretty," he added, tranquilly; and smiled to see how, at his words of praise, the angry light flashed up into Lady Cecil's eyes. "Don't you think so, Lady Cecil?" he added blandly.

"I really have not considered the subject. She never struck me as being pretty," Lady Cecil answered, carelessly; "but then, I never see any beauty in saucer eyes, and a wide mouth, and—red hair," she went on with a low laugh. "Do you, Mr. Beaumont? If so, your tastes must have altered strangely of late years."

"My taste is catholic, and, at the risk of incurring your contempt, I must admit that I admired the young lady," Beaumont answered, in his slow, lazy voice. "Is she a neighbour of yours?"

"Yes; she lives over there, at the Red House," and Sir John pointed across the fields to a clump of trees at a little distance, amongst which peeped the red brick chimneys of the house of which he spoke, "with her great aunt, Miss Mordaunt. It is a dull home for the girl, for Miss Mordaunt—who is a far-away cousin of mine, by the way—is a most peculiar person, and quite miserly in her habits. She rarely goes out, and never by any chance has any visitors. She has the reputation of being very rich, and she must be fairly well off, for she never spends anything," Sir John added musingly. "Only keeps one servant, and sells all her fruit and vegetables. I fancy poor Doris has a hard life enough. She certainly has a dull one. I often wish, my lady," and he glanced deprecatingly at his wife, "you would ask her here occasionally. It would be a little change for the child, and Floss is so fond of her."

"If you are content that she should be considered Floss's visitor, and remain in the nursery, I am quite willing to invite her," Lady Cecil answered in her coldest, sweetest voice, "but I must really decline to allow her to appear in the drawing-room among my visitors. She has not a dress fit to be seen, and her manners are quite too—impossible."

"Nay, there I differ from you," Sir John answered, stoutly. "Her frocks may be—I dare say they are—shabby enough; but I defy any one to find fault with her manners. She is a perfect lady, whatever else she is, like her mother before her. Ah," and his voice changed suddenly, and his eyes brightened, "here is Floss coming to meet us."

Floss was Sir John's only child, the very apple of his eye, and the pride and delight of his life. She was a pretty child, with her mother's golden hair and bright blue eyes, but with her father's amiable disposition and generous heart. She admired, but was secretly a little afraid of her mother, who had never quite forgiven her for not being a boy, and regarded her more as a beautiful superior being to be worshipped and adored from a distance, than a mother to be loved and caressed. She adored her father, over whom she exercised a beneficent despo-

tism, and had taken a great fancy to Paul Beaumont, who was naturally fond of children, and was always willing to play with her, and to bring her chocolates and toys.

Floss's arrival changed the conversation; and, although Sir John's narrative had sharpened rather than allayed the curiosity which the girl's lovely face had raised in Beaumont's mind, he was much too wary and polite to continue a subject which was, evidently, distasteful to his hostess, or to persist in praising the beauty of one pretty woman to another. So he allowed the subject to drop; but after lunch was over, and he and Floss were alone in the garden—Sir John had walked off to the stables, and Lady Cecil had retired to her dressing-room—he returned to it.

"Floss," he said, lazily—he was lying on the grass smoking, with half-closed eyes, while Floss sat by his side and stuck flowers into his buttonhole, and Soot, the terrier, and Jeannie, the colley dog, also sat at a little distance and watched her proceedings with eager eyes—"I saw a friend of yours this morning."

"Did you? Who was it?"

"Give a guess."

"Oh, I can't guess, Paul. Tell me. Was it old Mrs. Mason?"

"Don't know the lady; but this one was not old. She was young and beautiful, like—you and me."

"You are not beautiful, Paul, and you are not very young, either," Floss interrupted, with unflattering candour. "You have white hairs, and wrinkles round your eyes; but never mind, dear," and Floss tickled his nose lovingly with a long grass, "I loves you just the same! I allus loves people with white hairs and wrinkles, cause my dad has 'em, and I loves my dad better than any one else in the whole world," cried Floss, eagerly, and then sentiment suddenly vanished, and curiosity returned, and she enquired:

"Who did you see, this morning?"

"Doris Cairnes."

"I know," Floss nodded emphatically. "I s'pose you saw her in church. I wish I could go to church and see her too. I used to, once, but mother says I fidget her, so I don't go when she is at home, and I never see Doris now."

"Does she never come here?"

"No, never; I don't think," Floss added in a confidential whisper, "mother likes her."

"Why don't you think so?"

"Oh, because, when she used to come—dad and me used to bring her sometimes—mother used to look at her like this," and the young mimic drew up her head and gave such a ludicrous imitation of one of Lady Cecil's cold, disdainful side glances, that, involuntarily, Paul laughed outright, "and Doris thought she didn't like her, so she never comes now, and I am so sorry, 'cause I never see her."

"Can't you go to the Red House?"

"Not by myself, and nurse won't take me."

"Shall I take you? Shall we go this afternoon?"

Paul could not have told why he made the suggestion, or have explained the sudden interest which he felt in the pretty country girl. He had seen scores of prettier faces, and had never felt the slightest desire to improve their owners' acquaintance; but he felt an odd longing to see more of Doris Cairnes.

Floss welcomed the proposal with avidity. She jumped up quickly from the ground.

"Yes, come on," she said, decisively, "we'll go."

"I suppose your mother wouldn't be angry, eh?" Paul said, as he lazily followed her example, and brushed away the flowers and leaves from his coat.

"Not if I am with you. Mother is never angry with you," Floss returned, solemnly. "Everything you do is wight in her eyes."

This last sentence sounded so much more like a quotation, than an original remark, that Paul stopped suddenly, and looked down at her enquiringly.

"How do you know that?" he said.

"'Cause nurse said so to Celestine; and nurse allus knows everything," Floss answered, confidently. "Come on! and don't wrinkle up your forehead and look so cross and ugly," she added, reprovingly, as she slipped her small hand into his.

Paul laughed as he gave it a kindly pressure. For a moment he had felt slightly annoyed and surprised to hear that Lady Cecil's manner towards him had

been the subject of comment among the lynx-eyed domestics, who, no doubt, were fully aware of his past history, and of the relations which had once existed between him and their mistress; then he laughed and shrugged his broad shoulders.

"What does it matter?" he thought, and he gave Floss's hand a squeeze.

"Come on," he said, gaily.

Lady Cecil, sitting at her dressing-room window, watched the odd pair of friends cross the lawn, attended by the two dogs, and smiled contemptuously over the fancy which Beaumont had taken for Floss's society.

"He used not to be so fond of children, in the old days," she thought. "Was it because Floss was her child; the child of the only woman whom—or, so he had often told her—he had ever loved or desired to make his wife?"

Her face softened at the thought. For a moment she felt more tenderly towards Floss than she had ever felt before, watched with almost a motherly pride in her beautiful eyes, as the little white figure, with the floating golden hair and blue ribbons, went dancing across the lawn by Beaumont's side, and disappeared behind the thick belt of shrubs that divided the lawn from the park.

It was a beautiful scene on which she gazed from her window; as far as eye could reach stretched green pastures and waving fields of ripening corn, and it was all hers now by right of marriage. She had sold herself for it, and for her beautiful home, and Sir John's great wealth. She had made her bargain with her eyes open, and she had never, until now, repented it, or acknowledged that it had failed to bring her the happiness she had expected. But now, as she watched Paul Beaumont's tall figure striding across the park, with the child dancing round him, a great distaste for and a sudden conviction of the emptiness of life came over her, and hot, scalding tears welled up into her beautiful eyes. Oh, why had fate dealt so hardly with her? Why had riches come to Paul only when it was too late? she wondered, bitterly.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.